

between the terminal portions of sidewalls 132, 134. A cavity 142 is defined between the vertically extending sidewalls 132, 134, the end wall 140 and center console housing 116 to receive an audiovisual display 144.

Audiovisual display 144 is pivotally mounted within the cavity 142 of second console housing 118 to be adjusted between a raised or inactive position and an active or lowered position. A latch 146 is provided in cavity 142 to engage and lock the audiovisual display 144 when the display is placed in the inactive or stored position. When stored, viewing surface 148 of display 144 is substantially flush with the outer periphery 150 of second console housing 118.

Referring additionally now to FIGS. 4-6, the accessory module or pouch 138 of the alternative embodiment of the modular overhead console of the present invention will be discussed in greater detail. Accessory pouch 138 includes a lower surface 152, an upper surface 154, a flap 156 and a storage cavity 158 formed by the upper and lower surfaces 152, 154. Items 160, such as a garage door opener or the like, are stowed in the storage cavity 158. Items 160 are retained in cavity by flap 156, which is releasably secured to the lower surface of accessory pouch 138 by means of a fastener, such as a snap fastener or a hook and loop fastener.

As is seen in FIG. 6, another embodiment of an accessory module or pouch is disclosed. Accessory pouch 162 is formed as a tissue dispenser having a lower surface 164 including an aperture 166, an upper surface 168 and a storage cavity 170 defined there between. The accessory modules or pouches 138, 162 are generally formed of a polymeric material. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, accessory pouches 138, 162 are formed of a transparent polymeric material to allow passengers of the vehicle to view the contents of the pouch. It is understood that accessory pouches 138, 162 can be formed to have different geometries and features based on the types of materials to be retained in the module and still be secured to center console housing 116.

Accessory modules or pouches 138, 162 include a hook and loop fastening material 172 provided on the upper surface 154 of accessory pouch 138 to selectively position and removably secure mount the at least one accessory pouch to a securement surface in the cavity 136 of center console housing 116. When the accessory pouch is placed in cavity 146, hook and loop fastening material 172 interconnects with the overlay 111 provided in cavity 136 to detachably couple and secure the accessory pouch 138 in position. Overlay 111 acts as a securement surface to removably secured the accessory pouches to center console housing 116.

In another embodiment of the invention, a hook and loop fastener securement panel 173 is mounted within cavity 136 and is provided as the securement surface of the center console housing to engage fastening material 172 of accessory pouches 138, 162 to provide a more secure interconnection between the center console housing and the accessory pouches than that provided by overlay material 111. It is understood that accessory pouches 138, 162 of overhead console assembly 112 are selectively repositionable and removable within cavity 136 of center console housing 116 based on the convenience of the occupants of the vehicle.

While the best mode for carrying out the invention has been described in detail, those familiar with the art to which this invention relates will recognize various alternative designs and embodiments for practicing the invention within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An overhead console assembly and headliner combination for a vehicle comprising:

- a headliner including a support member;
- a first console housing disposed on the structural member of the headliner;
- a second console housing disposed on the structural member of the headliner, wherein the second console housing is spaced apart from the first console housing;
- a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, the center console housing including at least one securement surface, each of the at least one securement surface forming only an outer surface of the center console housing; and
- at least one accessory module selectively positionable on and removably secured to the at least one securement surface of the center console housing for storing materials, the at least one accessory module including a housing, a storage area defined within the housing to retain materials within and at least one securing member engaging the at least one securement surface of the center console housing.

2. The combination of claim 1, wherein the center console housing comprises a pair of spaced apart rails extending between and secured to the first and second console housings, wherein each rail includes a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail and an inner surface forming a cavity.

3. The combination of claim 2, wherein the rails are formed of extruded aluminum.

4. The combination of claim 2, wherein each of the rails is generally cylindrical in shape.

5. The combination of claim 2, wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module includes a lower surface having opposite ends, and the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module comprises a gripping portion extending from each end of the lower surface, each gripping portion engaging the securement surface of a respective rail.

6. The combination of claim 2, wherein each rail is generally cylindrical in shape, and each gripping portion is arcuately shaped.

7. The combination of claim 1, wherein the structural member of the headliner has a lower surface, and wherein the center console housing comprises an upper surface substantially flush to the lower surface of the structural member of the headliner, a pair of sidewalls extending vertically from the upper surface between the first and second console housings, and a cavity defined therebetween.

8. The combination of claim 7, wherein the upper surface and the pair of sidewalls extending vertically from the upper surface of the center console housing are integrally formed with the structural member of the headliner.

9. The combination of claim 8, wherein the first console housing and center console housing are integrally formed as part of the structural member of the headliner.

10. The overhead console assembly of claim 7, wherein the at least one securement surface of the center console housing is an overlay placed over the inner surface of the structural member of the headliner.

11. The overhead console assembly of claim 7, wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module secured in the center console housing further comprises an upper surface including the at least one securing member, a lower surface forming the storage area and an overlapping flap portion extending from the lower surface, wherein the

overlapping flap portion is removably fastened to the lower surface to enclose the storage area.

12. An overhead console assembly for use with a vehicle having a headliner, the headliner including a structural member having a lower surface, the overhead console assembly comprising:

- a first console housing disposable on the lower surface of the structural member;
- a second console housing disposable on the lower surface of the structural member in spaced relationship with the first console housing;
- a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, wherein the center console housing includes at least one generally cylindrical rail extending between and secured to the first and second console housings, the at least one rail having an outer surface; and
- at least one accessory module selectively positionable along and removably secured to the at least one rail of the center console housing for storing materials, the at least one accessory module including a housing, a storage area defined within the housing to retain the materials and at least one securing member engaging the at least one rail only at the outer surface of the at least one rail.

13. The overhead console assembly of claim 12, wherein the at least one rail of the center console housing comprises a pair of generally cylindrical, spaced apart rails extending between and secured to the first and second console housings, wherein each rail includes a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail and an inner surface forming a cavity.

14. The overhead console assembly of claim 13, wherein the rails are formed of extruded aluminum.

15. The overhead console assembly of claim 13, wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module includes a lower surface having opposite ends, and the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module comprises a gripping portion extending from each end of the lower surface, each gripping portion engaging the securement surface of a respective rail.

16. The overhead console assembly of claim 15, wherein each gripping portion is arcuately shaped.

17. An overhead console assembly for a vehicle comprising:

- a first console housing disposed on an inner surface of a structural member of a headliner of the vehicle;
- a second console housing disposed on the inner surface of the structural member of the headliner, wherein the second console housing is spaced apart from the first console housing;
- a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, wherein the center console housing comprises an upper surface substantially flush to the inner surface of the structural member of the headliner, a pair of sidewalls extending vertically from the upper surface between the first and second console housings, a cavity defined there between, and at least one securement surface disposed within the cavity; and
- at least one accessory module selectively positioned and removably secured in the center console housing, the at least one module comprising a lower surface, an overlapping flap portion extending from the lower surface a storage area formed between the lower surface and flap portion and an upper surface having at least one securing member attached thereto for securing the at least one module in the center console housing.

18. The overhead console assembly of claim 17, wherein the first console housing and center console housing are integrally formed as part of the structural member of the headliner.

19. The overhead console assembly of claim 17, wherein the overlapping flap portion of the at least one accessory module is removably fastened to the lower surface of the at least one module to enclose the storage area.

20. The overhead console of claim 17, wherein the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module is a hook and loop fastening panel secured to the upper surface of the at least one module.

21. The overhead console assembly of claim 20, wherein the at least one securement surface of the center console housing is an overlay placed over the inner surface of the structural member of the headliner.

22. The overhead console assembly of claim 20, wherein the at least one securement surface of the center console housing is a hook and loop fastening panel secured within the cavity of the center console housing.

23. The combination of claim 1 wherein the center console housing comprises at least one rail having a longitudinally extending securement surface disposed at an outer periphery of the at least one rail such that the securement surface forms only an outer surface of the at least one rail, and the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module removably engages the at least one rail only at the securement surface.

24. The combination of claim 1 wherein the at least one rail comprises polymeric material.

25. The combination of claim 1 wherein the center console housing comprises a pair of spaced apart rails, each rail having a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail such that the securement surface forms only an outer surface of the rail, the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module includes two securing members that engage the rails only at the securement surfaces so as to removably secure the at least one accessory module to the rails, and the housing of the at least one accessory module includes two vertically extending side walls disposed between the rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails, the side walls defining the storage area of the at least one accessory module.

26. The combination of claim 1 wherein the center console housing comprises a pair of spaced apart rails, each rail having a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail such that the securement surface forms only an outer surface of the rail, the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module includes two securing members that engage the rails only at the securement surfaces so as to removably secure the at least one accessory module to the rails, and the storage area of the at least one accessory module is disposed entirely between the two rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails.

27. The overhead console assembly of claim 12 wherein the at least one rail comprises polymeric material.

28. The overhead console assembly of claim 12 wherein the at least one rail comprises two spaced apart rails, and the housing of the at least one accessory module includes two vertically extending side walls disposed between the rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails, the side walls defining the storage area of the at least one accessory module.

29. The overhead console assembly of claim 12 wherein the at least one rail comprises two rails, and the storage area

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of the at least one accessory module is disposed entirely between the two rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails.

30. An overhead console assembly and headliner combination for use with a vehicle, the combination comprising:

- a headliner;
- a first console housing disposed on the headliner;
- a second console housing disposed on the headliner, wherein the second console housing is spaced apart from the first console housing;
- a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, the center console housing including a pair of spaced apart rails extending between and secured to the first and second console housings, wherein each of the rails includes a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery and an inner surface forming a cavity; and
- at least one accessory module selectively positionable on and removably secured to the securement surfaces of the center console housing for storing materials, the at least one accessory module including a housing, a storage area defined within the housing to retain materials, and at least one securing member engaging the securement surfaces of the center console housing.

31. The combination of claim 30 wherein the rails are formed of extruded aluminum.

32. The combination of claim 30 wherein each of the rails is generally cylindrical in shape.

33. The combination of claim 30 wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module includes a lower surface having first and second ends, and the at least one securing member of the least one accessory module includes first and second gripping portions, the first gripping portion extending from the first end, and the second gripping portion extending from the second end, each gripping portion engaging the securement surface of a respective rail.

34. The combination of claim 33 wherein each rail is generally cylindrical in shape, and each gripping portion is arcuately shaped.

35. The combination of claim 30 wherein the rails comprise polymeric material.

36. The combination of claim 30 wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module includes two vertically extending side walls disposed between the rails, the side walls defining the storage area of the at least one accessory module.

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37. The combination of claim 30 wherein the storage area of the at least one accessory module is disposed entirely between the two rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails.

38. An overhead console assembly and headliner combination for use with a vehicle, the overhead console assembly comprising:

- a headliner;
- a first console housing disposed on the headliner;
- a second console housing disposed on the headliner and spaced apart from the first console housing;
- a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, the center console housing including two spaced apart rails extending between the first and second console housings; and
- an accessory module selectively positionable on and removably securable to the rails, the module including a housing having vertically extending side walls that extend between the rails when the module is secured to the rails, the side walls defining a storage receptacle.

39. The combination of claim 38 wherein the storage receptacle is disposed entirely between the rails when the module is secured to the rails.

40. The combination of claim 38 wherein each rail has a generally cylindrical shape, and wherein the housing of the module includes a lower surface having first and second ends, the module further comprising first and second arcuately shaped gripping portions respectively extending from the first and second ends, each gripping portion being engageable with a respective rail.

41. The combination of claim 38 wherein the rails are formed of polymeric material.

42. The combination of claim 38 wherein each rail includes a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail, and an inner cavity, and wherein the module includes two securing members, each securing member being engageable with a respective securement surface.

43. The combination of claim 42 wherein when the securing members are engaged with the securement surfaces, the securing members do not extend into the cavities.

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